




One day the money was gone and the radioactive Russian thistle rolled over everything. The End.



standuponit
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2010-08-16 22:36:00

LOCATION: 3,000 miles to Graceland

MOOD: 😞 restless

MUSIC: Werewolves of London

There's a view of Las Vegas I've been watching all my life, off and on. You get it when you're driving back into town on the 15 south from Moapa or the Valley of Fire or the Paiute Smoke Shop (which is a giant travel plaza now, but I remember when it was just a place to buy illegal fireworks and cheap cigarettes. I was... more interested in the fireworks.) and you come over the pass right above the Speedway, where Las Vegas Boulevard connects back up with the 15. And you pass those things, and (now!) you pass the Beltway (Beltway?!) and then you come out from behind Frenchman's Mountain and Sunrise Mountain and--

You can see almost the whole valley from there, especially at night. During the day it's all pale blue sky and dusty haze, but at night the lights crawl out all the way to the end of the world. The Luxor light spearing skyward, a thin needle of brightness. The baleful green glow of the MGM Grand, like somebody dropped a mothership back there somewhere. (It used to have lasers, but apparently they posed a hazard to approaching aircraft or something. Pshaw.)

My whole life, that panorama of lights has been getting broader and broader. Filling the valley. Creeping up the mountainsides. So fast you could nearly watch it happen. You could compare your mental picture of how it had been last time and seen all the new houses, the new people moving in as fast as anyone could build.

This time? It's getting smaller. Falling back into itself. There are gaps in the lights, places where the streets are lit but the houses aren't. There are whole neighborhoods that are empty.

It's eerie. Even more eerie if you've been to Rhyolite (https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhyolite,_Nevada) or Goldfield (https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goldfield,_Nevada).

It makes me wonder what those towns felt like when they were in the process of drying up and blowing away.

...Vegas would make one Hell of a ghost town.



Random holiday cookie recipe is random.

"Peeling Bells" cookies: This is a thing my mom used to do. 2 cups flour 6 tsp butter 3/4 cup sugar 1

Away with the dull drudgery of workaday tiday waves!

I believe this is a significant advance in pot pie technology. Make your pie crust. Par-cook

As easy as-- no, really.

I was talking about the chicken pot pie I was making on Twitter, and it turns out, a lot of people

41 comments




 ace_cub_reportr

August 17 2010, 02:38:43 UTC

COLLAPSE

Stop that. You're on vacation. You're supposed to be sowing wild oats or something, not musing on the bittersweet inevitability of the passing of all things.



 standuponit

August 17 2010, 02:39:02 UTC

COLLAPSE

They're exclusive?




 ace_cub_reportr

August 17 2010, 02:51:17 UTC

COLLAPSE

Wonder Woman sends her love, by the way. And says to tell you she knows you're checking in with me, and "Stop it before I tell Mom on you."




 [standuponit](#)

[August 17 2010, 02:51:39 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

...

Ace, has anybody ever told you you're a shit-disturber?




 [ace_cub_reportr](#)

[August 17 2010, 02:52:06 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It's congenital.




 [trollcatz](#)

[August 17 2010, 02:39:33 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

He's just mad because that's supposed to be his job.



 [ace_cub_reportr](#)

[August 17 2010, 02:40:44 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!'



 [trollcatz](#)

[August 17 2010, 02:41:58 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Seriously. You cool? Because I'm not sure you sound cool.



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[August 17 2010, 02:45:47 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Nah, fine, fine. Occasional bouts of moody. Not taking them out on the girl so they go on the Internet.

We're fine here. Go kiss your wife.



 [trollcatz](#)

[August 17 2010, 02:46:31 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

"Just a slight reactor core leak?"

It's not a boring conversation.




 [standuponit](#)

[August 17 2010, 02:47:28 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Awww bugger. I'm as cool as I can be, okay? We'll talk when I get back. Now I have to go eat Second Dinner.

Deleted comment



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[August 17 2010, 02:49:05 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Werewolves is the unstoppable song, man.

MZVs to "My Ride's Here" for apocalypses, I think. Or maybe "Don't Let Us Get Sick."



 [zwol](#)

[August 17 2010, 04:31:22 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

And if California slides into the ocean
Like the mystics and statistics say it will
I predict this motel will be standing
Until I finally pay my bill

(if I never set foot in Los Angeles again, it will be too soon)



 [standuponit](#)

[August 17 2010, 05:03:18 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Don't the sun look angry through the trees?
Don't the trees look like crucified thieves?



[rikibeth](#)

[August 17 2010, 14:57:21 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Heaven help the one who leaves...



[djinnthespazz](#)

[August 17 2010, 02:46:11 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

"...Vegas would make one Hell of a ghost town."

Wow. damn straight, that.



 [standuponit](#)

[August 17 2010, 02:47:59 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

The new construction wouldn't last, but those old block houses would stand a long time.



[djinnthespazz](#)

[August 17 2010, 03:00:30 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)


seeing it

Just remove the water. Fini.

This is eerily close to my musings this week. Phoenix goes to the polls next Tuesday. There seems to be an enormous tear in the fabric of America, and being a resident of Arizona, I get to see one of the teams in action.

I'm not from around here, and it shows.



 [standuponit](#)

[August 17 2010, 03:06:46 UTC](#)

Edited: August 17 2010, 03:07:02 UTC

[COLLAPSE](#)

Yeah. Taken a look at [Lake Mead](#) lately? Removing the water could happen. And it would all go away like a dandelion puff.



[djinnthespazz](#)

[August 17 2010, 04:39:50 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

The Las Vegas Review-Journal [...] blasted the study in an editorial. "Predictions such as these virtually never come true," the paper declared. "From Thomas Malthus in 1798 to Paul Ehrlich in the 1970s, the forecasters of famine, abandoned cities and desolated economies always look like fools in the end because they refuse to take into account the ingenuity and enterprise of the human race."

Nobody in Phoenix is held accountable for water usage. Sure, they'll fine you when your sprinkler breaks and you're running 300 gallons a day - but monitoring or rating water per household? Nothing. Boggles my mind.

And the concept that all the water treaties are somehow never going to come back into consideration. I've heard this statement 'We have enough water for people' That's only because the water was allocated for agriculture, which true, uses water like nobody's business. But Phoenix is a boom town, too - spreading all over its valley with very little checking it's progress (at least, until the last few years) Enough water for people? Until what tipping point?

The fact that there are people who insist the tipping point doesn't exist makes me nutters.

Sorry. I've had a bad day, and all it takes is a little bit of encouragement... go... be on vacation.

Have some fun!



[jennygadget](#)


[August 17 2010, 19:05:13 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

You know, I always thought the most post-apocalyptic looking place ever was Lake Powell. (once you get away from the Marinas, etc.) That picture has me rethinking that opinion.

resists urge to curl up in a ball and bury my head under the covers



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[August 17 2010, 22:03:21 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It's a lake. On Mars.

 [cjtremlett](#)

[August 17 2010, 03:12:07 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

When I lived in Dubai, they stopped watering a golf course that I drove by every day, in preparation for remodeling work (upgrades to the sprinkler systems at least and assorted other things). In less than a week it went from perfect golf course grass to post-apocalyptic landscape.

In Detroit, it's taken nature years to reclaim abandoned blocks. In places like Vegas, it would go so much faster. Is going, I expect.


Is it just me, or do other people find that sort of thing, nature reclaiming abandoned human developments, both sad and reassuring?

 [paulakate](#)

[August 17 2010, 03:20:16 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It's not just you.



 [standuponit](#)

[August 17 2010, 04:23:13 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It depends on what you mean by "reclaim." The grass dies fast. The trees turn into skeletons. But old structures hang on for a long time.

 [djinnthespazz](#)

[August 17 2010, 04:30:00 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

As a former Detroitier, I tend to see my birth city's decline as horrifying. But the process of renewal, by nature and by man, continues - as it always does. We're just always way behind the curve nature imposes on us.

On the edge of the desert boom towns - when you transplant a saguaro, you won't know for about five years whether it's alive or dead. Desert plants endure, and they don't know they are doomed for a long, long time. So in Vegas that is an equally long term view as in Detroit - watching the demise, watching what arrives in its wake.

 [sprrwhwk](#)

[August 18 2010, 05:58:52 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

In places like Vegas, it would go so much faster. Is going, I expect.

Water, and plants, have a huge restorative effect that isn't present in the desert.

Is it just me, or do other people find that sort of thing, nature reclaiming abandoned human developments, both sad and reassuring?

Yes, me too.

I hope that the people who've blown away as the city has dried up are moving to places where living is a little less precariously pitched on the edge of human technology, ingenuity, and a favorable climate. I hope this despite knowing how deep human folly runs, but I do still hope.



[bunny_m](#)

[August 19 2010, 11:15:17 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Is it just me, or do other people find that sort of thing, nature reclaiming abandoned human developments, both sad and reassuring?

Most definitely. A pointed reminder of how ephemeral humanity and their works can be.



[dichroic](#)

[August 17 2010, 11:00:33 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I thought it was the Luxor, not the MGM Grand, that had the lasers? Or maybe that's just a confusing referent. Yeah, pilots going blind is a Bad Thing though I think that was always more of a fear than an actual likelihood.

I wonder if the boomtowns withering will help with the water situation? When I lived in Phx, it was plain that the best thing anyone who liked Arizona could do for it was to leave. (I did, eventually.) Though really I think the worst offender is LA, which only has enough water because AZ and NM aren't using the full amount allocated to them.



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[August 17 2010, 14:27:44 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Maybe I got it wrong--I was a kid at the time, and it wasn't the first thing on my mind.

I thought Arizona was buying water from Nevada because it needed more than its allotment? I haven't been keeping up on the politics lately, though.



[dichroic](#)

[August 17 2010, 14:45:13 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)


I just googled a bit. The Wikipedia article says I remembered right ("Since the development of the Colorado River Compact California has been using the surplus water that has been left over from other states; however with increasing population growth in the Southwest there is concern that this surplus soon will not exist for California's use.") but I don't think it's up to date, because there are some references to calls for renegotiation in 2008 and nothing after that. (Apparently John McCain claled for the COmpact to be renegotiated during his campaign, then relized that was not a good political move and recanted.) Most of the other articles I could find are older than that. There was apparently a meeting of the Attorneys General of several Western states in April to discuss it but I don't see anything about

what happened or any changes.

I finally found something that looks definitive, from the Water Resources Research Center at the U of A, though it doesn't have a date on it. It says, "Arizona cannot currently directly use all its allotted CAP water and does not expect to directly use the full allotment until the year 2030. Since California claims a right to take unused Colorado River water, Arizona has devised a way of keeping as much of it as possible in the state. The Arizona Legislature created the Arizona Water Banking Authority (AWBA) to acquire unused portions of Arizona's allocation of Colorado River water and put it to use for storage underground or, in other words, to recharge it in central Arizona."

So apparently states negotiate sharing water rights more or less the way toddlers negotiate sharing their toys.



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[August 17 2010, 14:50:55 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

And it turns out I had the details backwards. Nevada is paying Arizona to "bank" its unused allocation in Arizona's aquifers. Nevada makes this up by using some of Arizona's allotment of Lake Mead.

http://www.snwa.com/html/wr_colvr_azbank.html

Basically, everybody upstream is trying to keep their surpluses away from California.

 [dichroic](#)

[August 17 2010, 14:52:26 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Toddlers!


 [dichroic](#)

[August 17 2010, 14:53:43 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Well, not really toddlers, on second thought. "Banked" water gets to be used later, when you might be short of it. Water used by California is gone.

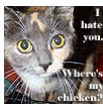
And even worse, could be used to set precedent for why they need so much if it ever is negotiated.



 [ace_cub_reportr](#)

[August 17 2010, 17:35:41 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

And all of them are keeping the Colorado's water from reaching Mexico, remember. Just doing their patriotic duty, right?



 [standuponit](#)

[August 17 2010, 17:47:24 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

They'd just use it.

Or maybe there would be wetlands.




 [calanthe-b](#)

[August 17 2010, 23:48:53 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Gee, that sounds familiar.

Yes, I am South Australian and bitter, why do you ask?



 [bunny_m](#)

[August 19 2010, 11:13:50 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Thankfully here in Perth we don't have to fight the entire east coast for our water, but we do have a highly worrying decline in our rainfall over the past decade or so.

I do wish our politicians wouldn't squabble over water like a pack of grumpy seagulls over a chip, but then why should water be different to anything else?

(Dear federal election, please be over now so I can go back to turning on the radio without being in constant fear of suddenly having to listen to Tweedledumb or Tweedleevendumber.)




 [calanthe-b](#)

[August 19 2010, 23:50:50 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Perth's rainfall situation is deeply worrying, yes. And here in South Australia we've been in drought for a decade and still have to listen to the entire east coast complain that we use too much water from the Murray...

Well, it's kind of inevitable that we use water from the Murray given that for much of the state it's *the only viable water source*! What do they expect us to use, Lake Eyre?

 [jennygadget](#)

[August 17 2010, 19:00:37 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I wonder if it's a southwest thing - to have some idea even as a kid where your water actually comes from. I suppose it might not be, but I can't imagine the conversation coming up as frequently in households that don't go through periods of drought.

I know that's how the topic came up in my house when I was a kid anyway - the "local" LA news stations would be talking about cities rationing water and I'd wonder aloud if we would ever have to - prompting my dad to explain (AFTER reminding me not to waste water in any case) that snooty Redlands (where we lived) didn't get water from the same place as most of the rest of SoCal, we shared rights to Big Bear Lake. (with added explanations about snowfall and spring runoff, because he's a science teacher and loves to explain things.)

 [dwgism](#)

[August 18 2010, 18:55:17 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Every time I visit my parents I go back to my old bedroom and reassure myself the landscape I see out of the window is still there, getting back in touch with my childhood roots I guess.

A couple of years ago I went to do that, stared out of the window for several minutes trying to put my finger on what was wrong and eventually called down to my folks 'Why is there a new hill out there?'

It turned out they had been landscaping old colliery spoil heaps and had landscaped this one right into my line of sight, but new hills are just wrong....

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